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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 000355

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD/DIBBLE;
NEA/SA/EX FOR RICHIE; DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DEPT FOR
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NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN; USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP, PRM FOR
DEWEY/GREENE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG PHUM PREL PTER ASEC CASC GZ IS](#)

SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: A TOTAL OF FIVE PALESTINIANS KILLED
AND TWO IDF SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN GAZA: JANUARY 20, 2005
(1200 HOURS LOCAL)

ConGen Jerusalem is closed January 20.

1. (SBU) Summary: Two IDF soldiers were wounded January 19 southeast of the Erez Crossing, near Nissanit, when Palestinian militants fired an anti-tank missile at a bulldozer they were operating. A total of five Palestinians were killed and another six were injured January 19-20 in Gaza clashes. IDF troops discovered an eight-meter-deep tunnel shaft in the al-Salaam quarter of Rafah January 19 during excavations in the area. Limited talks between the IDF and Palestinian security forces in Gaza resumed January 18, according to a statement issued by PM Sharon's office and Israeli media. Diplomatic talks, however, remain suspended until the Palestinians "have taken tangible steps to halt terrorist actions and the firing of Qassam rockets and mortar shells." Israeli media also reported that Palestinian security forces would deploy in the northern Gaza Strip in the coming days in order to prevent Qassam rocket fire into Israel. End Summary.

Gaza

2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Palestinian sources reported that IDF soldiers killed a Palestinian January 19 six kilometers east of Morag. The IDF said that warning shots had been fired towards the man.

-- Deaths: The IDF reported that soldiers shot and killed two Palestinians January 19 during an IDF incursion into the area between Karni and Nahal Oz Crossings after the militants threw hand grenades at troops operating there (see "Incursions/Demolitions").

-- Deaths: UNRWA and Israeli media reported that two Palestinians were killed January 19 near Bayt Hanoun during an exchange of fire between Palestinian militants and IDF soldiers. The two Palestinians were attempting to plant a bomb, according to Israeli media (see "Incursions/Demolitions").

-- Injury: The IDF reported that IDF tank fire injured one Palestinian January 20 near an IDF outpost west of Khan Yunis.

-- Injuries: The IDF reported that two IDF soldiers were wounded January 19 when Palestinians militants fired an anti-tank missile at a bulldozer they were operating southeast of the Erez Crossing, near Nissanit (see "Mortars/Rockets"). Israeli media reported that three soldiers were wounded in the same attack.

-- Injuries: The IDF reported that three Palestinians were wounded January 18 when IDF soldiers fired on them as they tried to cross Abu Khouli checkpoint on foot.

-- Injury: UNRWA reported that a 12-year-old boy was injured January 18 during an exchange of fire between IDF soldiers and Palestinian militants in the al-Zoroub neighborhood of the Rafah.

-- Injury: The IDF reported that one Palestinian was wounded by an IDF operational dog after the man tried to flee a search and arrest operation in Rafah (see "Incursions/Demolitions").

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants fired one Qassam rocket at Dugit settlement January 19, and one mortar shell and one anti-tank missile at IDF soldiers southeast of the Erez Crossing, near Nissanit, the same day.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants

launched a total of six shooting attacks in the Gaza Strip January 18-19.

-- Explosions: The IDF reported that IDF soldiers discovered and safely disposed of two explosive devices January 19 near an IDF outpost south of Rafah.

13. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS:

-- UNRWA reported that IDF bulldozers excavated areas in the al-Salaam quarter of Rafah January 19, while soldiers carried out house searches in the area. The IDF and Israeli media reported January 20 that soldiers had discovered an eight-meter-deep tunnel shaft in Rafah during the searches.

-- UNRWA reported that IDF undercover units supported by IDF armored vehicles entered and searched the area between Karni and Nahal Oz Crossings January 19. Palestinian militants fired small arms and threw hand grenades at the soldiers, while bulldozers leveled ground in the area (see "Deaths").

-- UNRWA reported that five IDF tanks and two bulldozers excavated an area near Bayt Hanoun January 19, while IDF troops carried out house searches in the area. IDF soldiers and militants clashed throughout the day, with militants firing small arms and reportedly trying to plant bombs (see "Deaths").

14. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was re-opened January 20, with a major detour remaining in place at Netzarim Junction. Only public transportation is allowed through Abu Khouli.

-- Erez Crossing was open for internationals, but closed for Palestinians January 20.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone remained closed January 20.

-- Sufa Crossing remained closed January 20.

-- Karni Terminal remained closed January 20.

-- Rafah Terminal remained closed January 20.

-- Tel al-Sultan and Toufah checkpoints were closed January 20.

15. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

-- Limited talks between the IDF and Palestinian security forces in Gaza resumed January 18, according to a statement issued by PM Sharon's office and Israeli media. Diplomatic talks, however, remain suspended until the Palestinians "have taken tangible steps to halt terrorist actions and the firing of Qassam rockets and mortar shells."

-- Israeli media reported that Palestinian security forces would deploy in the northern Gaza Strip in the coming days in order to prevent Qassam rocket fire into Israel.

-- Israeli media reported that the IDF is planning to re-open the Rafah Terminal January 21.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

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